

# Culture

Pages E-1 through E-4  
Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT

**Song:** Hope at the Crossroads  
**Words and Music by:** Michael Mahler

CD 1, Track 5  
FCYB Music CDs

## **Materials Needed**

**Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT**, FCYB Music CDs, CD player, copy of the film “*The Perfect Storm*” and a VCR or DVD player for Setting the Stage, incense, matches, candle, table and a small model lighthouse for the Opening Prayer, magazines, newspapers, scissors, markerboards, poster board for “Creating a Culture Collage” Small Group Activity.

## **Setting the Stage (10 minutes)**

Show a short clip from the movie “*The Perfect Storm*.” Find any scene or scenes in the movie that especially depict how the characters are making tough choices in order to succeed or (toward the end of the movie) to survive. Let the clip that you watch lead directly into the Opening Prayer. Have incense burning and place a small model lighthouse on the prayer table.

## **Opening Prayer (5 minutes)**

*God, Our Father, we praise You as creator of all people and all things.  
Help us to recognize the diversity within our community and in our world as an  
opportunity to love and to understand. Give us courage to face the cultural  
storm around us and the strength to make “Christ-like” choices along the way.  
Help us to become a beacon of light for others to follow at every crossroad.  
Give us hope and confidence in all our relationships with each other,  
as members of a family, as citizens of a country and most importantly  
as members of the “Body of Christ.” In Jesus name we pray, Amen.*

Conclude with a traditional prayer or Psalm (example: “The Memorare” or Psalm 141).

## **Large Group Discussion – “Defining Culture” (10 minutes)**

Discuss the teens’ answers to these questions:

What are the issues that you think best define today’s culture?

Do movies, television and music reflect or influence our culture?

What do you think the phrase “culture war” really means?

## **Small Group Activity – “Creating a Culture Collage” (20 minutes)**

Using several magazines and newspapers and a poster board per table, have teens work in small groups to create a collage of pictures and headlines that depict the culture we live in. Have a spokesperson for each table describe and/or explain their collage.

## **Group Discussion – “Christ’s Course Corrections” (10 minutes)**

Read the Your Decision/Your Reward article on page on E-1 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Follow with a discussion of different situations or “storm threats” that teens may find themselves in and how Christ would have them respond with a “course correction.” “Christ’s Course Correction Log Book” on page E-1 will help you begin the discussion. The ideas that the teens came up with in creating the collages should help you think of more scenarios to discuss.

## **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

Prayerfully, read the 1 on 1 With Christ article on page E-4 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Discuss the teens’ answers to the following question. After the discussion, close with an “Our Father.”

What can I do this week to show others an example of making a good decision?

## **Bed Thinks**

When you go to bed tonight ask yourself this question . . .

**Do I need to change anything that I am watching or reading  
in order to live my life to give honor and glory to God?**

*(Type this message on a small piece of paper and give to each teen as they leave.)*

# Culture

Pages E-5 through E-8  
Fireside Catholic Youth Bible - NEXT

**Song:** Hope at the Crossroads  
**Words and Music by:** Michael Mahler

CD 1, Track 5  
FCYB Music CDs

## Materials Needed

**Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**, FCYB Music CDs, CD player, a notepad for each teen to use for “journaling” or a prepared “list of things that teens struggle with” for the What Jesus Said Large Group Discussion, a notepad to list the Scriptures in the Putting My Faith Into Action “Scripture Search Challenge” Large Group Discussion.

## Setting the Stage

No special arrangements are needed to set the stage for this session plan.

## Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Proclaim Matthew 10:16 on page E-5 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. After a moment of silence, ask one of the teens to read this prayer:

*Holy Spirit, be with us as we discuss our culture and its impact on our lives.  
Open our hearts and our minds to the truth that Jesus taught.  
Give us the courage to follow Jesus even if it goes against our culture.*

## What Jesus Did

### Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)

Read the What Jesus Did Scripture quote and article on page E-5 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Then, discuss the teens’ answers to these questions:

Who is Jesus speaking to in Matthew 10:16?

What is He telling them? What is He telling us?

In our society if we, Jesus’ disciples, are the sheep, who or what are the wolves?

*(Ideas might include those who don’t believe in Jesus, those who persecute believers, those who want to eliminate all reference of God from public places, those who support abortion or euthanasia or the people caught up in consumerism or materialism.)*

Do you think Jesus was counter-cultural in his time? If so, what were some of the instances in Scripture that prove that Jesus did the very thing He was telling his disciples to do?

As disciples of Christ, are there times when we must speak out against views popular in our society? Discuss some examples.

Has that opportunity ever presented itself to you? If so, how, where, when?

## What Jesus Said

### **Large Group Discussion – “Good Seeds and Weeds” (15 minutes)**

Read the What Jesus Said Scripture and article on page E-6 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**. Then discuss the teens’ answers to following questions:

- Who is the sower? Who are the “good seeds?”
- Why do we pull weeds from a planting bed or garden?
- In our society, what /who would you identify as weeds?

Remind the teens that “weeds” can be very personal too. Weeds can be bad habits or sins that keep us from following Jesus with a whole heart. Have teens “journal” about the “weeds” that they struggle with or give them a list of things that teens struggle with and have them check the ones that pertain to them. After a few minutes remind the teens of God’s grace and mercy found in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Suggest that frequent confession could be just the weed killer they need.

## Putting My Faith Into Action

### **Large Group Discussion - “Scripture Search Challenge” (20 minutes)**

Divide the teens into groups of two or three to discuss the To Make or Break and Tips for Talking entries on page E-7 in the **Fireside Catholic Youth Bible – NEXT**.

Make - Challenge the teens in the coming week to identify three Scripture passages that have special meaning for them. Encourage them to use Jeremiah 29:11-14 as an example. Ask them to write them down and be prepared to share and discuss their choices and how they have chosen to make them a part of each day during that week.

Tips for Talking - Ask each teen to write down a simple definition of what “truth” means to them and share their answers with the group. Follow-up with a discussion of their answer challenging them to answer questions like: Is truth fixed and unmovable? Is truth absolute? Can truth be different for one person than it is for another person? Bring the discussion back to the role of Scripture as the source of truth for us as Christians.

### **Closing Prayer – (5 minutes)**

Prayerfully listen to the song “Hope at the Crossroads” by Michael Mahler. CD 1, Track 5 of the FCYB Music CD’s. Then pray together:

#### A Disciple’s Prayer in Today’s Culture

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the security I feel in placing my faith in You.  
Give me the strength to survive and the courage to thrive in the culture war around me.  
Defend me in this battle and inspire me to be an example to my friends of the love  
and understanding I see in the life of Your Son. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*

### **Mindful in the Morning**

When you wake up in the morning, before you get out of bed . . .

**Ask Jesus to be with you and help you be His true disciple in the culture war today.**

*(Type this message on a small piece of paper and give to each teen as they leave.)*